

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend claims 12, 14, 38, 40, 43, and 48 as set forth herein, and cancel claims 1-11, 28-37, 42, and 44-47 without prejudice or disclaimer. All pending claims and their current status are set forth below:

1-11. (Canceled)

12. (Currently amended) A search system for ranking Internet search results based upon popularity of web pages on a network, the search system comprising:
- a plurality of monitoring devices placed in the network, the monitoring devices monitoring packets traversing the network and extracting information on the packets;
 - a processing module coupled to the monitoring devices and receiving the extracted information from the monitoring devices, the processing module analyzing the extracted information and determining the popularity of the web pages based upon the extracted information, the popularity of the web pages being ~~substantially~~ proportionate to actual number of visits to the web pages as indicated by the extracted information; and
 - a search engine for receiving search terms and retrieving web pages containing the search terms, the search engine ranking the web pages at least in part based upon the popularity of the retrieved web pages.

13. (Original) The search system of claim 12, wherein the search engine ranks the retrieved web pages based upon the content of the web pages and the hyperlink structure linking the web pages as well as the popularity of the retrieved web pages.

14. (Currently amended) The search system of claim 12, wherein the search engine propagates a score of a first web page to a plurality of second web pages to which the first web page is linked ~~substantially~~ in ~~relative~~ proportion to the popularity of links from the first web page to each of the second web pages.

15. (Original) The search system of claim 12, wherein the search engine ranks a first retrieved web page in higher priority than a second retrieved web page if the popularity of the first web page is greater than the popularity of the second web page.

16. (Original) The search system of claim 12, wherein the monitoring devices are placed in locations where aggregate packet traffic may be monitored.

17. (Original) The search system of claim 12, wherein the monitoring devices are placed at a traversal point for complete bi-directional activity between a client device and a server on the network.

18. (Original) The search system of claim 12, wherein the monitoring devices extract the information from packets in a TCP session, and the extracted information includes:

- a requested URI or URL;
- a client IP address; and
- a server IP address and a server host name.

19. (Original) The search system of claim 18, wherein the extracted information further includes a referrer URL.

20. (Original) The search system of claim 18, wherein the monitoring devices analyzes the packets relating to GET Requests in the TCP session to extract the information.

21. (Original) The search system of claim 12, wherein the monitoring devices discard packets relating to invalid URLs, invalid GET Requests, requests from a web crawler, or auto-refreshment of previous TCP sessions in extracting the information.

22. (Original) The search system of claim 12, wherein the processing module maintains a counter corresponding to a URL and increments a count of the counter if the extracted information indicates that the web page corresponding to the URL was visited, the count indicating the number of visits to the web page.

23. (Original) The search system of claim 12, wherein the processing module maintains a plurality of counters corresponding to a URL and increments a count of one of the counters if the extracted information indicates that the web page corresponding to the URL was visited by a client device located in a geographical location corresponding to the counter of which the count was incremented, the count indicating the number of visits to the web page from client devices in the corresponding geographical location.

24. (Original) The search system of claim 23, wherein the processing module increments the count only if the extracted information indicates that the web page was visited by the client device having a distinct IP address.

25. (Original) The search system of claim 23, wherein the processing module does not increment the count if the extracted information indicates that the packets were automatically and repeatedly generated by a computer.

26. (Original) The search system of claim 12, wherein the monitoring devices detect requests to stale web pages.

27. (Original) The search system of claim 12, wherein the monitoring devices detect pages unknown to the search engine.

28-37. (Canceled)

38. (Currently amended) A method for ranking Internet search results based upon popularity of web pages, the method comprising:

receiving a search term;

performing search of web pages on the Internet based upon the received search term;

retrieving a plurality of web pages containing the search term; and

ranking the web pages at least in part based upon the popularity of the retrieved web pages, the popularity of the retrieved web pages being determined based upon information extracted from packets traversing the Internet and being substantially proportionate to actual number of visits to the web pages as indicated by the extracted information.

39. (Original) The method of claim 38, wherein ranking the web pages comprises ranking the web pages based upon the content of the web pages and the hyperlink structure linking the web pages as well as the popularity of the retrieved web pages.

40. (Currently amended) The method of claim 38, further comprising propagating a score of a first web page to a plurality of second web pages to which the

first web page is linked ~~substantially~~ in ~~relative~~ proportion to the popularity of links from the first web page to each of the second web pages.

41. (Original) The method of claim 38, wherein ranking the web pages comprises ranking a first retrieved web page in higher priority than a second retrieved web page if the popularity of the first retrieved web page is greater than the popularity of the second retrieved web page.

42. (Canceled)

43. (Currently amended) A search system for ranking Internet search results based upon popularity of web pages, the search system comprising:

a plurality of monitoring means placed in a network for monitoring packets

traversing the network and extracting information on the packets;

processing means coupled to the monitoring means for receiving the extracted

information from the monitoring devices, analyzing the extracted

information, and determining the popularity of the web pages based

upon the extracted information, the popularity of the web pages being

~~substantially~~ proportionate to actual number of visits to the web pages;

and

search engine means for receiving search terms and retrieving web pages

containing the search terms, the search engine means ranking the web

pages at least in part based upon the popularity of the retrieved web

pages.

44-47. (Canceled)

48. (Currently amended) A search system comprising:

a plurality of monitoring devices placed in the network, the monitoring devices monitoring packets traversing the network and extracting information on the packets;

a processing module coupled to the monitoring devices and receiving the extracted information from the monitoring devices, the processing module analyzing the extracted information and determining the popularity of the links from a first web page to a plurality of second web pages based upon the extracted information, the popularity of each of the links being ~~substantially~~ proportionate to number of times each of the links is actually traversed as indicated by the extracted information; and

a search engine for receiving search terms and retrieving web pages containing the search terms, the search engine propagating a score of the first web page to the second web pages to which the first web page is linked ~~substantially~~ in ~~relative~~ proportion to the popularity of links from the first web page to each of the second web pages.